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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000668

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DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, IO, IO/T

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04-20-14

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [AORC](#) [PREL](#) [CE](#) [IO](#)

SUBJECT: Colombo Plan: How do we deal with arrears?

Refs: (A) SA/INS-Colombo 04/07/04 class email
- (B) Colombo-IO/T 03/25/04 class email
- (C) Colombo 301, and previous

(U) Classified by Ambassador Jeffrey J. Lunstead.
Reasons 1.5 (b,d).

[11.](#) (U) This is an Action Request -- Please see
Para six.

[12.](#) (C) Poloff attended the bimonthly meeting of the Colombo Plan Council on April 7. On the margins of the meeting, poloff spoke to Colombo Plan Secretary General [13](#)K. Kanjanapipatkul and reiterated the USG position that we would not be able to support the proposed amendment to the Colombo Plan constitution that would restrict training opportunities for members in arrears (per Ref A). In explaining the USG's position, Poloff noted -- again per Ref A -- that the U.S. held in high regard the Colombo Plan's efforts in the area of drug awareness and demand reduction, and would not want countries to be prohibited from participating in such beneficial programs.

[13.](#) (C) In response, the Secretary General requested that the USG consider the following two suggestions on how to handle the matter:

-- Would the U.S. consider a statement for the record citing its opposition to the amendment as an "official view," but not obstructing the consensus of the other 25 member countries to support the amendment?

or:

-- Would the U.S. consider officially offering an alternative to the proposed training sanctions amendment? The Secretary General felt such an effort by the U.S. would be welcomed by other member countries. Lack of a viable alternative would effectively terminate the discussion and leave Council members wondering how next to address the issue of countries in arrears.

[14.](#) (C) COMMENT: As currently designed, the proposed amendment restricts a member country's access to training opportunities if it is four or more years in arrears of its annual dues (see Ref C). Participation in training would be restricted until a partial payment of arrears was made. As reviewed in Refs, Mission believes that member states have given careful consideration to the issue and developed a straightforward method for addressing the problem of arrears. (Restricting training opportunities appears to be the sole way for the organization to impact countries not paying their share of the annual dues.) Other forms of sanctions were discussed in the Council and deemed not effective, including those related to the suspension of voting rights. In fact, all decisions are taken by consensus, and there are no provisions in the constitution for formal voting. Hence a suspension in voting rights, as suggested by the Department, would have no practical effect, since there are no votes.

[15.](#) (C) COMMENT (Continued): The Secretary General's first suggestion that the USG officially voice non-support yet not prohibit the majority view to implement the amendment seems to be a possible way out of the quandary. With our official view on record, the U.S. would remain capable of monitoring the consequences of the amendment and have standing within the Council should an issue arise concerning its implementation.

[16.](#) (C) COMMENT (Continued): At present, the United States is the only Council member voicing opposition to the proposed amendment. Even states such as Indonesia, which would be subject to the new sanctions because it is currently in arrears, are in support of the proposed amendment. It is also distinctly in the US interest to motivate countries to pay their dues. The US contributes money for counter-narcotics programs under the Drug Advisory Program, administered by the Secretariat. Member dues are the Secretariat's only

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source of income. The Secretariat tells us that non-payment of dues will soon damage their ability to function effectively. END COMMENT.

17. (C) ACTION REQUEST: We understand the concern that a financial restriction could set an unwelcome precedent for other international organizations. The proposed course of action would at least partially deal with this problem. The US could express its opposition to such measures in principle, but state it would not oppose consensus. Mission requests that the Department review this matter further. If such a stance is not supported by the Department, Mission then further requests that the Department consider proposing an alternative means for sanctioning member states who are four or more years in arrears on their annual dues. The next opportunity for the U.S. to finalize its position is at the next Council meeting, scheduled for July 7, 2004. (Note: The Colombo plan is holding its biennial Consultative Committee Meeting in Tehran from June 14-16, 2004. Due to the fact that the meeting is in Tehran, the USG will not be in attendance.) END ACTION REQUEST.

18. (U) Minimize considered.

LUNSTEAD